



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Video clips from the State of the City can be downloaded [here](#).

Video of Nancy Melendez accepting the award can be downloaded [here](#).

High-resolution photos from the State of the City are available on request.

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City of Riverside Recognizes Nancy Melendez at State of the City Event

Community volunteer receives Dr. Carlos Cortés Award for Championing Diversity and Inclusivity

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The 2016 State of the City Address on Thursday included a new recognition this year as Nancy Melendez, President of the Spanish Town Heritage Foundation, was awarded the Dr. Carlos Cortés Award for Championing Diversity and Inclusivity.

The award recognizes a volunteer who has made a meaningful commitment of time and service in the past year to furthering the City of Riverside's pledge to build a more inclusive community.

"For everything she does on behalf of advancing the cause of diversity and inclusivity in Riverside, I am proud to present this award to Nancy Melendez," Mayor Rusty Bailey said. "Riverside is fortunate to have Nancy Melendez inspiring our city to become more inclusive."

Melendez is the founding president of the Spanish Town Heritage Foundation, which raises awareness of the need to preserve and restore the Trujillo Adobe and supports a vision to build a re-created Spanish Town settlement on the land.

The site, known as La Placita or La Placita de los Trujillos, was established in 1845 on the easterly bank of the Santa Ana River as the earliest community in what became Riverside County. Melendez's great-grandparents, John and Sarah Trujillo, were the last family members to live in the historic adobe that remains there.

The Foundation, which Melendez started with family members Suzanne Armas and Darlene Trujillo Elliot, raises funds for the preservation and restoration effort through a variety of activities, including the Riverside Tamale Festival, scheduled for April 16 in White Park.

“I am proud to accept this award on behalf of the Spanish Town Heritage Foundation and all the volunteers who are working on behalf of the Trujillo Adobe,” Melendez said. “Working together, we will bring to fruition our vision for Spanish Town as a community gathering place that honors our unique heritage and the important role it played in the history of the City of Riverside.”

The award is named for the UC Riverside professor emeritus of history who is recognized as the single most influential force in shaping the City of Riverside’s Inclusivity Statement, which seeks to include multiple cultures within the Riverside community in everything the City undertakes.

An internationally-recognized scholar on race and ethnicity, Dr. Cortés’ decades of groundbreaking research, writing and consulting work make him one of America’s leading voices on diversity. In addition to his scholarly publications and work as a consultant to government agencies, universities and private businesses, Dr. Cortés also serves as the creative/cultural adviser for Nickelodeon’s award-winning “Dora the Explorer,” and its sequel, “Go, Diego, Go!,” – for which he received the 2009 NAACP Image Award.

“I’m delighted that the Mayor is championing diversity and inclusion, and am deeply honored that the award is in my name,” Cortés said. “It took me completely by surprise.”

Dr. Cortés joined UC Riverside in 1968 as a professor of Latin American history, and retired from active teaching in 1994. He remains an active scholar, writing and editing books, and lecturing throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Australia on the implications of diversity for education, government, private business and the mass media. He also co-chairs the Mayor’s Multicultural Forum in Riverside.

Among his books are “Rose Hill: An Intermarriage before Its Time,” a memoir about growing up as the child of a Jewish mother and Mexican-American Catholic father, “The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach about Diversity,” and “The Making – and Remaking – of a Multiculturalist.” He co-edited “Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia” (Sage, 2012), a four-volume encyclopedia that examines historical and contemporary issues of race and ethnicity in America.

“Dr. Cortés has left a lasting imprint on Riverside through his work locally and on the world stage,” Mayor Bailey said. “I am grateful to him for agreeing to have such an important community recognition bear his name.”